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ANDRE GAUTIER.

AN ORIGINAL DRAMA, IN FIVE ACTS,

BY

ALEX. CONLY.

"To err is human; to forgive, divine."

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ANDRE GAUTIER,

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CHARACTERS.

Andre Gautier.....
John Raynor.....
Tom Lee.....
Milton Vincent.....
Perry Winkle.....
James Desmond.....
Jerry Mulligan.....
Willy.....
Cupid.....
Rose Lee }
Sister Rose }.....
Mrs. Claud Parker.....
Alice Lee.....
Sally Brown.....
Sweet Violet.....
Mrs. Jerry Mulligan.....

AND OTHERS.

ACT I. "Too late—too late."

ACT II. "I killed her, John. Strike me to your feet!"

ACT III. The Greek boy.

ACT IV. Sister Rose.

ACT V. Death of Andre Gautier.

"Her voice seems to drown this inner woe!"

ACT I.

SCENE I. A poorly furnished room, the home of Rose Lee. John Raynor and Tom Lee seated close together—both are smoking.

Lee. How late it is ! It is almost seven o'clock, yet Rose has failed to put in an appearance.

Raynor. Don't get anxious, Tom. Some extra work at the shop has detained her, no doubt. Rose is a good girl, Tom, as good as she is beautiful.

Lee. Yes, yes; Rose has worked and strived to save her old invalid father from bitter penury, from the poorhouse, I may well say, without a murmur, or a single regret that her hard fate might be otherwise. (*Glancing at the clock.*) How late it is ! Get me my crutches, John.

Raynor. Surely, Tom, you are not going out. If it is necessary to go in search of Rose, why I——

Lee. No, no; sit down, John, and make yourself comfortable.

(He takes the crutches and hobbles painfully to the window.)

How dark it is ! Not a single star to be seen. John, John, something must have happened to Rose.

Raynor. You are excited, Tom. She is with Andre Gautier, no doubt.

Lee. Andre Gautier ! Heaven forbid ! I would rather see my innocent child dead at my feet than the wife of that unscrupulous man.

Raynor. Well, well; he seems to be a very pleasant young man, Tom.

Lee. Outwardly, yes. But I tell you, John, that man is a consummate scoundrel. He is the very essence of all that is bad. Though so outwardly calm, rage, hate, and mingled despair is fast changing Andre Gautier into a soulless devil.

Raynor. I trust that you are in error, Tom.

Lee. Devil or no devil, I have concocted a clever plan to outwit Andre Gautier.

Raynor. Indeed ! Then you are about to marry Rose to another person ?

Lee. Exactly.

Raynor. Is Rose aware of this ?

Lee. No; but she is a good girl and will obey my slightest wish.

Raynor. She won't give up Andre, Tom. The poor girl is madly infatuated, wildly in love. Who is the other man, Tom?

Lee. Yourself, John.

Raynor. What! Marry me! An old man, almost sixty!

Lee. Yes, you, John. The best, the purest amongst living men.

Raynor. This is mere folly, Tom. An absurd sort of madness without——

Lee. Don't look at the matter as though you were about to destroy Rose's future happiness, but rather grasp the chance with unfaltering determination, rather welcome it as the harbinger of peace and rest.

Raynor. You drive me mad, Tom. You think you hold the golden key to open Paradise for your old friend, but believe me, Tom, the magic of it belongs to Andre Gautier. I am almost sixty, Tom. I am feeble, palsied, and poor; my hair and beard has long ago assumed a tinge unbecoming to the lover of an ardent, passionate young lady. Think of the contrast, Tom.

Lee. Listen to me, John. I am an old man, like you. I am sick, weak and crippled, and likely to die at any moment. If such were to happen, what would become of my tender little Rose? She would be alone in the world, friendless, destitute and unprotected. She would then fall an easy prey to Andre Gautier, and once in the talons of such a merciless wretch, the sweetness and charm of our Rose would soon fade and die. It is in your power to save my child; my wish that you should wed one of the purest and loveliest of women. You must say yes, John, for if you were to say otherwise, you would kill your friend and render Rose an orphan.

Raynor. You are not jesting, no! no! Yet the thought of such sweet bliss is only so much mingled pain! I am ashamed to confess it, Tom, but I love Rose more than anything else in the world.

Lee. Your heart is young, John, and the love you bear Rose will eventually prove her salvation, likewise the stepping stone to your own happiness.

Raynor. Will you speak to Rose, Tom? Tell her that the love of an old man is stronger than death. Tell her that henceforth John Raynor, your school-boy friend, is her protector and slave, and as her husband will shield and care for her better than any other living man.

Lee. My good John !

Raynor. But if she should refuse, Tom—if she should despise me and refuse even to be a friend, and scorn the old man with scoffing sneers——

Lee. My foolish John !

Raynor. Don't ask her to marry me, Tom; her friendship is so sweet and precious, that I dare not run the risk of losing it, perhaps forever.

Lee. Wait and see—but leave the room, Rose is coming.

Raynor (going). Plead like a father, for remember, Tom, there will be no lover to whisper a dream of love on the morrow—only an old man's trembling voice to tell her how fond and happy he would like to be. (*Exit.*)

(Enter Rose Lee, running, followed slowly by Sally Brown. Perry Winkle stands outside, peering curiously from behind the door.)

Rose. You darling old pa ! How anxious, how careworn you look, and merely because I happened to be an hour or two late. I ought to look very severe and scold you awfully; but oh ! that dear, old, smiling face, I must smother it with *scolding* kisses instead.

Lee. My sweet Rose ! How dark, how cheerless a life mine would be, were not you present to brighten it. Ah, Sally Brown, is that you ? How are you, Sally ?

Sally. Here's a rum go ! Where's my Perry Winkle ?

Lee. Have you lost anything, Sally ?

Sally. Yes; I've lost Perry Winkle.

Rose. Do not mind the bashful boy, Sally. Perry Winkle is Sally's sweetheart, father.

Lee. Another ? Oh, you girls !

Winkle (aside). You giddy young girls.

Sally. I am going to marry Perry Winkle, sir, if I have to drag him to the altar.

Winkle (aside). Not if I can *winkle* out of it.

Sally. Then I am going to furnish a nice little room.

Winkle (aside). Not if there's room left for me to skip.

Lee. Right you are, Sally.

(A disturbance without. Enter James Desmond, drunk, leading Willy by the hand, both in rags. He staggers blindly, pushing Winkle on before him.)

Desmond. Ah there, Sally ! Here's Perry Winkle, who (*hic*) says he's going to marry Annie (*hic*) Jones.

Sally (in tears). The ungrateful wretch ! and he is the third

man who has deceived me this week, all three popping the question in the morning, and popping out of it at night. Perry Winkle, dare you admit that you no longer love me?

Winkle. I daren't, Sally.

Sally. Oh, Perry, Perry, you love me yet—loved me for a whole day! Well, the men are not so bad, after all.

Desmond. His heart is true (*hic*) to (*hic*) Poll.

Sally. You miserable whisky bottle on wheels! How dare you meddle with the course of true love?

Desmond. Don't get mad, Sally, I wanted (*hic*) the chance to (*hic*) to (*hic*) propose myself. Two proposals in one day might (*hic*) produce (*hic*) good results, (*hic*) Sally.

Sally. I always did say that you were a jolly good fellow. (*Aside.*) If I fail to hold Perry Winkle for another day, I shall consider your remark in the light of a proposal. Well, the men are just lovely.

(Enter Mrs. Jerry Mulligan, dressed in a masquerade costume, representing the old woman that lived in a shoe.)

Winkle. Here's Mrs. Mulligan.

Mrs. M. Ah, you young dude—so Sally's got you in the toils, has she?

Sally (aside to Winkle). Say to her, "She's mine forever!"

Winkle. I daren't, Sally.

Sally. Perry Winkle!

Winkle. She says, "Her's mine forever!"

Mrs. M. Troth an' ye are, me bye, if she can put a halter round yer nick.

Sally. Perry Winkle is free to go—free to love another——

Winkle. Thank you, Sally, I'll go at once.

Sally (aside and holding him back). Don't go, stupid! I said that to deceive Mrs. Mulligan.

Winkle. Well, you were so clever about it that you deceived me.

Sally. I'll fix you for this! (*Looking at Mrs. Mulligan.*) Well, here's a rum go.

Mrs. M. Don't me castom suit you, Sally? It's made dancing length. Well, Sally, if you could afford the expense of a castom, I'd take ye along as a side show.

Sally. Side show, indeed! Since you won a prize in the Loosi Lottery no one can endure your vulgar style——

Mrs. M. Bad cess to ye ! It's well you know that me purse was always long.

Sally. She means her tongue !

Mrs. M. Wid ye look at the poor crature ! Faith an I feel sorry for you, my poor bye. (*To Winkle.*)

Sally. Don't get angry, Perry Winkle; don't attempt to defend me.

Winkle. I daren't, Sally.

Sally. She's Irish, for that reason—

(*Mrs. M. slaps her face.*)

Desmond. That's (*hic*) Irish, not (*hic*) English, you know.

Rose. Oh, Mrs. Mulligan ! I am so sorry, Sally.

Lee (aside). Take Sally away, Winkle, in order to save further trouble.

Winkle. I daren't, Tom.

Lee. Perry Winkle is anxious to take you away, Sally. Will you go with him?

Sally. Yes, I will. Revenge is sweet.

(*Exit Sally, holding Winkle by the ear.*)

Rose. So you are going to the masquerade ball, Mrs. Mulligan ? And the children—I suppose Mr. Mulligan will take care of them ?

Mrs. M. Divil a bit, Miss Rose; the childer is beyond the dure.

Rose. What a delightful surprise !

(*Rose throws open the door. Enter Cupid, followed by three boys and three girls, each dressed in a different costume and fan. They flock about Rose, caressing, kissing and prancing about her in perfect delight.*)

Rose. How charming ! And Bertie—he is a perfect picture ! Never did Cupid look half so sweet.

Mrs. M. He's a swate bye, Miss Rose, and a smart one. He received a gold medal to-day, me darlint did.

Rose. A gold medal ! Is it possible !

Mrs. M. Yes, Miss Rose, he was the best hand at rec--reci--

Cupid. Recitation, mamma.

Mrs. M. You're right, me bye, that's what won the prize, sure enough.

Rose. What did you recite, Cupid ?

Cupid. The poem "Forever."

Rose. Oh, Bertie, please recite it before papa ? It would please him so much.

(Bertie recites as follows):

Those we love truly never die,
Though year by year the sad memorial wreath,
A ring and flowers, types of life and death,
Are laid upon their graves.

For death the pure life saves,
And life all pure is love, and love can reach
From Heaven to earth, and nobler lessons teach
Than those by mortals read.

Well blest is he who has a dear one dead,
A friend he has whose face will never change,
A dear communion that will not grow changed:
The anchor of a love is death.

The blessed sweetness of a loving breath
Will reach our cheek, all fresh through weary years;
For her who died long since, ah, waste not tears,
She's thine unto the end.

Thank God for one dead friend
With face still radiant with the light of truth,
Whose love comes laden with the scent of youth
Through twenty years of death.

Desmond. Bravo, (*hic*) Cupid, (*hic*) bravo!

Mrs. M. Ah, me swate bye, the idol of his old mother's heart.

Rose. Sweet Cupid! surely an angel whispered. It is like a dream.

Mrs. M. How purty you do talk, Miss Rose. It's like looking at flowers to listen to ye.

Lee. You express yourself in a truly poetical spirit, Mrs. Mulligan. Did you not hear, Master Cupid?

Cupid. You bet! Mother's catching on—but listen—hurrah! Father's coming up the stairs.

Rose. Another surprise!

Cupid. Yes, here comes an old San Francisco landmark, cherished as it is memorable, and dear to every heart that kindly beats, on this, our golden shore.

Desmond. Bravo, (*hic*) Cupid, (*hic*) bravo.

(Enter Jerry Mulligan, with a violin, made up to represent Emperor Norton.)

Cupid. Welcome, Emperor Norton!

Mr. M. Troth an I envy you those leather lungs, me darling bye. It's a cold I hev mesilf, or I'd favor the company with a song.

Desmond. Don't (*hic*) give us a (*hic*) one-side (*hic*) view of our (*hic*) beloved Emperor. He didn't (*hic*) sing; his (*hic*) dignity forbade it.

Mr. M. Go 'way wid ye! Dignity, is it? And do yez mean to compare Emperor Norton with Jerry Mulligan? Could Emperor Norton beat this, if it's dignity yez are after?

(He dances a breakdown.)

Mrs. M. Jerry's the bye to make the dust fly. But the fiddle
—play the fiddle, and see how well the little Mulligans can waltz.

(Jerry plays the violin and the children dance.)

Cupid. Am I to be left out, mother? Where's my partner?

(He sees Willy, who is lying asleep in a corner. He wakes him.)

Mrs. M. You'll spile your castom, me bye, with that durty
bye.

Cupid. Hush, mother, it's only hired, and not to be paid
until called for.

(He joins the dance.)

Rose (aside and glancing at the clock). It is almost nine o'clock;
if I fail to keep my promise to meet André, he will never forgive
me. Oh, why don't they go!

Desmond. I (*hic*) can't (*hic*) stand this, Mrs. Mulligan. Let's
(*hic*) join (*hic*) the dance.

(He clutches Mrs. M. and whirls her about the room in comical confusion. The
clock strikes nine.)

Mr. M. Bedad, and we're late, ould girl, and we'll miss the
grand promenade. Be off wid ye!

Children. Good night—good night.

Rose and Lee. Good night.

(Rose stops Willy and Desmond as they are going out.)

Rose. Leave Willy here for to-night, Mr. Desmond; he looks
so pale and careworn, and needs some care, for, like me, he is
motherless.

Lee. My poor, tender Rose.

Desmond. No (*hic*) mother? I'm a father and a mother to
him (*hic*) I'm blessed (*hic*) if I ain't.

(He staggers out. Rose gets some matting and makes a bed before the fire and
places Willy upon it.)

Rose. Poor child! I feel that he is about to die.

(She turns and looks at her father who is seated beside the table, with his head
upon it. She kneels at his feet.)

Rose. Father, dearest father, why are you sad? Try to be
cheerful, father.

Lee. I am ill, Rose. Do not mind the melancholy of an old
man who is not destined long for this world.

Rose. Oh, father, if you knew the tenderness of my love! No
sacrifice would be too great to win you a moment's relief from
pain.

Lee. There is something on my mind, Rose. Oh, the suspense, the agony, the grief of it! I tell you, Rose, that it is fast killing me.

Rose. You are suffering from some secret cause; how cruel to hide it from one who loves you above all the world.

Lee. It concerns you, Rose.

Rose. Me, father?

Lee. Aye, you and Andre Gautier.

Rose. Andre Gautier?

Lee. How exultantly you speak his hated name. Then you love him, Rose?

Rose. Very dearly, father.

Lee. Rose, you must give him up. He is a coward—yes, yes, this Andrew Gautier is a coward. Protestations of love coming from such a source can only end in your dishonor. Andre Gautier, with all his millions, can never stoop to the wretched level of a shop girl.

Rose. My God, give me the strength, the courage, to bear this.

Lee. My tender Rose, God will give you strength, and guide you safely through this terrible danger. Rose, I speak from experience, and my past knowledge of men tells me that you are about to take a fatal step. Give up Andre Gautier, Rose, and marry John Raynor.

Rose. I cannot, father.

Lee. Remember, Rose, my sole desire is to insure your future peace and happiness. I use no harsh words, and remember, also, that I only wish to guide, not to force you.

Rose. This is so sudden, father. Am I—I to give you a definite answer to-night?

Lee. My pure and saintly child, a week hence will do. You have made me so happy, Rose, so strong and well again. Kiss me, child, and say good night.

Rose. Good night, father.

(Exit Lee.)

Rose. Another dream of delusion! Oh, the hard fate, the cruel misfortune that overthrows the brightest hopes! Give up Andre? Marry John Raynor? (*She snatches her hat and shawl.*) I will keep my promise and meet Andre Gautier this very night. (*She kneels at her father's door.*) I cannot give him up, father! (*Willy wakes.*) I shall seek the truth to-night, but if he proves a coward, you may trust me still. Andre Gautier shall tell me the

truth above my mother's grave, and—I may fall dead upon it.
(*Exit.*)

(Willy rises and runs to the open door. Snow is falling.)

Willy. Whew! there's a regular snow storm! But this won't prevent me from following poor little Rose, for it seems to me as if Tom Lee's daughter were going away forever. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II. The old Mission Dolores Church by moonlight, after a snowstorm, with surroundings: the graveyard, tombstones, etc., a large, solitary, white cross, with the name "Mother" engraved upon it.

(Enter Andre Gautier. He stands beside the cross.)

Andre Gautier. Confound it! Confound the evil destiny that has brought me here to-night. It is almost ten o'clock, yet the girl is not here.

(Enter Rose.)

Rose. Andre, Andre!

Andre Gautier (aside). How fair, how sweet! Oh, despicable heart to worship passionately, yet falsely. (*To Rose.*) Rose, my darling Rose!

Rose. You are standing almost upon my mother's grave, Andre. Oh, sweet fatality!

Andre Gautier. You strange girl! I suppose your idle little head must needs weave an unalterable superstition from the mere fact.

Rose (kneels upon the grave). The cruel snow has hidden from view the one beloved name which I most long to gaze upon. Have you a handkerchief, Andre?

(She wipes the cross and discloses to view the name "Mother.")

Rose. See, Andre! Oh, mother, mother!

(She kisses the name and caresses the cross tenderly.)

Andre Gautier. Pray get up, Rose. The ground is cold and wet.

Rose. How coldly you speak, Andre.

Andre Gautier. Did I? Then my interest in you prompted me to do so.

Rose. You are always so kind; but, Andre, I should like you to kneel here beside me.

Andre Gautier. The girl is surely mad! Shall I kneel to please her or——

Rose. Come, Andre.

André Gautier. You foolish girl ! I do not desire to kneel there, Rose ; I do not wish to idly profane sacred ground.

Rose. André, you compel me to speak frankly ; you sent me a note, and said therein that you intended to ask me to be your wife. Let us pledge our love kneeling, André.

André Gautier. I have something to tell you, Rose ; I cannot marry you at once.

Rose. Then I am to be your wife, André ?

André Gautier. At a distant time, yes. My mother would hate me forever were I to marry a poor girl, but meanwhile, Rose——

Rose. Speak, André, I am listening.

André Gautier. We could fly together——

Rose. André Gautier, you coward !

André Gautier. Ah, I feared so ; you do not love me ; you do not wish to see me happy.

Rose. Don't speak, you only mock me.

André Gautier. I cannot give you up, Rose ; I love you beyond all else in the world.

Rose. I hate——oh, God, how I hate you !

André Gautier. You are forgetful of the sweet past—that sweet past which is filled with enduring friendship and trusting love ; it will come back, Rose, all the old time memories.

Rose. Why do you recall the one bright light left to me ? If the past was sweet, André, why dispel it amidst so much gloom ?

André Gautier. It is destiny, the harsh fate that sometimes mocks our sorrows, only to sunder them ; these are the strange occurrences that seem to be so bitter, yet change to be our bliss.

Rose. I shall die ; leave me !

André Gautier. Rose, dear Rose, if I should leave you now I would go mad with fear ; you still love me ?

Rose. Hush ! I must pray. Oh, mother, listen to your child ! What devilish feeling is this ? A soulless mockery of my own prayer——some delusive words mingling with my own.

André Gautier. Be calm, Rose. See, I kneel by your side.

Rose. As your wife, André, oh, say as your wife.

André Gautier. This emotion will pass away, and in the interval think of how I love you.

Rose. Hush, I must pray. I refuse to listen——there is a very poison in the sweetness of your voice.

Andre Gautier. All is over between us—I hardly thought it would end like this.

Rose. Andre, Andre, I cannot let you go. I—Andre—stay!

Andre Gautier. Stay? My sweet Rose! I will stay with you forever.

Rose. Kiss me, Andre, for the last time. What is that?

(An organ is heard from the church.)

Andre Gautier. Music, and our own sweet dreams. In every tuneful note I hear the echo of your own sweet voice.

Rose. Let me go, Andre! We must part!

Andre Gautier. Come, let us go together. Why dispel our dream of happiness, Rose?

(A chorus of voices is heard from the church singing; Rose falls back unconscious in Gautier's arms.)

Andre Gautier. Here's a bright prospect! May all the evil in this world fall upon her! If she were only dead—then her sweet, fair face could no longer tempt me. How strange, how weird those voices sound in this gloomy spot! Ah, she revives.

(The voices stop; Rose starts up, then stretches out her arms, and falls, clinging to the Cross.)

Rose. Oh, if I could only die!

Andre Gautier. I will see her again. (*He goes, looking back, and listening to the music.*) A week or so of waiting and eager longing will do more for me than months of pleading.

(Exit, the music stops. Enter Willy.)

Willy. How cold it is! and this lonely churchyard—why look, it is Rose! Rose clinging to her mother's cross! (*He clutches hold of Rose, trying to lift her up.*) Rose, Miss Rose, please come home.

Rose. Poor Willy, yet you only make my misery more hard to bear. I shall never go home again, never!

Willy. I am so cold, yet it is nothing to what I feel for you. If you were to go away, what would become of your poor old father?

Rose. Alas, you speak the truth! I must go home.

Willy. It is so cold! See this lovely flower—this morning it was sweet, oh, so sweet, and now it is icy cold and frozen.

Rose. It is like my heart—how like! how like!

(The music is heard again.)

Willy. When I left the house your father was dreaming.

Rose. Alas! I must go home.

(Music here.)

Will. He was dreaming of you, saying, "Angels protect my tender Rose."

Rose. And you are the angel sent to protect me—this sweet boy—heaven's answer to a woman's prayer.

SCENE III same as SCENE I. Tom Lee alone. He is lying upon a lounge dying.

Lee. I feel weaker than ever. I may die before Rose comes back. To see her resting upon the strong arm of good John Raynor, as his wife! What a happy prospect to know that my child is safe—safe and sheltered by the best of living men; yet, sometimes I dread the consequences of my own rash desire, now that it is about to be fulfilled. Rose is good and pure but so easily tempted. What if Andre Gautier should come here and tempt my darling Rose! John is old and poor—such a wretched prospect for a lovely young wife. My mind is growing confused, everything seems dark and so far away; steady, steady; if I live, we shall go into some unknown place, and if Andre Gautier should see Rose, then—no, no, John Raynor would kill the wretch!

(Enter Rose, Raynor, Sally Brown, and Perry Winkle.)

Rose. Father, dear father.

Lee. Welcome back, Rose, and accept a father's gratitude for your noble conduct. And—you—John. Come nearer, old friend—nearer still. How can I—thank—you? (*Aside.*) John, I—am—dying. In a moment—more you—will—be—her—sole protector. John, John—take her—away—take Rose away.

Rose. What did you say, father? What a strange look came over your face as you whispered to John. Is anything wrong, father? You look so pale and wan.

Lee. Don't become fanciful, Rose. I was merely telling him that you were dea—dear—dearer—than ever—to me—as—John's wife.

Rose. How strange your voice sounds, father! And your face! There seems a mist between it and mine—something that shuts out your old smiles, the dear humorous ring in your voice. What is it, father?

Raynor. Your father is tired, Rose. Come, let us leave him alone.

Rose. You cannot deceive me. Oh, father, live—live for my sake!

Lee. Poor—Rose—John's—wife——.

(He tries to speak again.)

Rose. Speak, oh, speak, dear father! He is speechless; in a moment he will die!

Raynor. Be silent, pray be silent!

Rose. Oh, father, if I could die with you! Speak—only one little word. Say Rose once more—anything, only speak!

(A knock at the door; Winkle opens it. Enter Andre Gautier. Lee looks at him with wild, dilated eyes.)

Lee. Back, back! Don't touch my innocent child!

Raynor. My God! this is terrible!

Lee. Andre Gautier, curse you! John—Rose—come nearer—nearer! Now—you—are safe, good bye—good bye!

(He falls back, dead; Rose throws herself upon his body.)

Andre Gautier. Rose, Rose, why do you not speak to me?

Raynor. You have made a strange mistake, sir. Are you mad, to still remain when a dying man has cursed you with his last breath?

Andre Gautier. Cursed!—and what care I for curses? I am come to claim my darling Rose.

Raynor. Wretch, guard that evil tongue of yours, or perchance I may find a way to do it.

Andre Gautier. Calm yourself; at a future time I will answer you. What is rankling you, old man?

Raynor. The unhappy fate that has brought you here; the wretched adherence of guilt in the presence of the helpless dead.

Andre Gautier. Rose, Rose

Raynor. Shall I kill him, or—oh, peace, peace, for poor Tom's sake.

(Rose looks up.)

Andre Gautier. Rose, I am come to ask you to be my wife. Why do you look at that old man?

Rose. Go, go, and never enter this house again! No, no! Father, father, let me gain strength to bear this! Let me die with you!

(She falls senseless.)

Raynor. If my old friend were not dead there, I would kill you!

Andre Gautier. Your idle words I do not understand, but (*he kneels at the side of Rose*) Rose Lee shall be my wife.

Raynor. She is no longer Rose Lee—Mrs. John Raynor, sir, and my wife.

Andre Gautier. Too late! too late!

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE I. The meeting of Market, Geary and Kearny streets, with the Lotta Fountain in the centre. Pedestrians passing to and fro. Enter John Raynor and Alice Lee—they meet face to face.

Raynor. Alice, I am so glad to see you again. I thought you were in the country.

Alice. I returned yesterday, John, hastily recalled by a speedy message announcing Rose's marriage to Andre Gautier.

Raynor. Infamous! Then you did not know— (*Aside.*) I was about to tell her all—tell her that Rose is my lawful wife—that she fled with Andre Gautier! It is useless to ruffle this calm and trusting heart.—Pardon me, Alice, for I am getting old and nervous; strange words slip from me sometimes, strange memories wake in me like old faces seen in dreams.

Alice. But you are still our dearest friend, John. I am going to Rose now, John. Won't you come with me?

Raynor. I would like to go with you, Alice, but—oh, Alice! you ask too much.

Alice. Too much, John? Oh, I see. You are poor and dread to meet your old friends because they are rich. You foolish John! As if that could make any difference; as if Rose and I could ever repay the debt we owe you.

Raynor. Remembrance—ah, blessed word, yet the cruel mockery that prevents stricken mortals from going mad! Thank you, Alice, and good-bye.

Alice. You must not leave me like this, John. Promise me that you will come up to-night; if your poverty deters you from going, then ask for me, and you shall see no one else; no, not even Rose.

Raynor. I shall call, Alice, but not to-night.

Alice. I shall anxiously wait until you come. For the present, good-bye.

Raynor. Good-bye, Alice, and God bless you. (*Exit Alice.*) Yes, I shall go, and if possible, save that young girl from a life of sin—perhaps death!

(Enter Eastern Tourist. He takes a drink at the fountain. Enter a very small boy, smoking a cigarette.)

Small Boy. Say, stranger, won't yer giv' us a drink?

Tourist. Bless my soul! A wee bit of wretched humanity, and, Great Scott! smoking a cigarette.

Small Boy. Giv' us a drink, stranger?

(*Tourist takes cup, fills with water and passes it to boy.*)

Small Boy. Much err bliged, stranger. By the way, wot yer giv' me if I show you about town?

Tourist. Bless my soul! Is the boy in earnest?

Small Boy. With all me soul, stranger; wot yer want—China-town first, Barbary Coast, Tar Flat, or Butcher Town? Let me giv' yer a pointer, stranger; yer can't attempt to reach them yer places without a proper guide like me. They smell of pizen; I'm the auntydote, stranger. There's a cop! (*Tourist holds him.*) Let a feller alone, can't yer?

Tourist. Stay! I like to hear you talk.

Small Boy. A cop, don't yer ketch on? A cop and the eight o'clock ordinance is dead against a feller like me. Gimme a light agin yer cigar, stranger, won't yer? (*Tourist does so.*) And now I'll skip.

(Exit boy.)

Tourist. Bless my soul, but he is a bright youngster! (*Feels pocket.*) My purse!—it is gone! Stop thief! Stop thief!

(Exit, running, with a policeman after him.)

Raynor. It is past midnight. I have walked the streets since nightfall; no home, no friend, no work. Must I indeed wander about until I die—die of hunger and want?

(Enter Andre Gautier.)

Andre Gautier. Who talks of hunger and want? Here is money——

Raynor. Andre Gautier! The inhuman ghoul that has tempted my innocent wife!

Andre Gautier. Let me pass, man, or I will strike you to my feet!

Raynor. By heaven, no! I have sworn that when we two should meet, face to face, one of us would never leave the spot alive.

Andre Gautier. You arouse the devil in me, and when in that condition I would kill you!

Raynor. I had a weapon—it is gone! And I sought to kill you.

Andre Gautier. Take that! (*He strikes Raynor a heavy blow; Raynor falls.*) Lie there and rot! I shall tell Rose of your pitiful

position, and that you begged me for alms; and also, that I thrust you in the gutter. (*Exit.*)

(Enter Willy, in rags. He takes water and tenderly bathes Raynor's head.)

Willy. How cruel ! Struck to the earth ! You, a weak, old man ! Heaven pity you ! (*He falls down beside Raynor.*) No hope—no hope !

SCENE II. The home of Andre Gautier. Two elegantly furnished rooms, one pink, the other blue, divided in centre. Andre Gautier alone.

Andre Gautier. The charming Alice Lee ! Rose is indeed eclipsed by her younger sister. Frail, delicate, and with a subtle charm of grace and manner softly womanly, yet bright and clever withal. Why did I not see Alice first ! but now—yet it is not too late—not too late to make Alice my wife. If Rose were conveniently away ! Rose is a perfect fury ! How she fumed and worried when she found out that I deceived her in regard to my mother—threatened to leave me, but it was too late—the angel's wings were soiled—ha, ha ! and too weighted with sin to ever float the expectant sinner again ! I will tempt her ; yes, and awake that spirit of devilry that is ever lurking in the heart of woman—the tigerish ferocity that only shows itself when she is scorned or hated by one whom she has trusted or loved. (*He goes to the window.*) A fine night, perfect moonlight, the bay a distant reflection of the heavens above—but what is that ? A ship on fire ! And now everything is blood red—the sea and sky are bathed in that lurid glow. (*He draws the curtains. The scene darkens.*) I shall call Alice and Rose—but I must strike a light first. (*He strikes a match.*) I hear a step outside—a strange footstep. Who can it be ?

(Enter Mrs. Claud Parker. The match goes out.)

Mrs. Parker. Andre ! Andre !

(She gropes in the dark in an alarmed manner, speaking in a slow, gasping voice.)

Andre ! Andre ! Oh, speak, Andre Gautier !

(Andre clutches her by the arm, seeking to drag her to the window.)

Andre Gautier. Who are you ? Your voice seems to come back from the grave. Speak ! Where have you come from ?

Mrs. Parker. Am I then a stranger to you ? I am your mother, Andre.

Andre Gautier. My mother ? Woman, you lie !

(In his turbulent fury Andre pushes her from him: she clutches hold of a table to save herself from falling. Now, thoroughly frightened, she seeks to escape. In groping about, her hands come in contact with the curtains; she pulls them aside, and the room is flooded by moonlight.)

Andre Gautier. It is you, my mother.

Mrs. Parker. Your affectionate mother! Dear, dear Andre, don't forget that.

Andre Gautier. Where have you come from?

Mrs. Parker. From Boston, Andre.

Andre Gautier. Boston! Not from prison?

Mrs. Parker. Prison? No, church.

Andre Gautier. Church? What do you mean?

Mrs. Parker. I am married again.

Andre Gautier. Married—married! When I was ready to swear, ere you appeared, that you were fast rotting in a prison cell!

Mrs. Parker. Don't get in a passion, Andre; leave that to us poor women, for it is one of our natural weapons of defense, snatched from the elements, no doubt, when thunder and lightning sought to rend the earth in twain. But to explain: when the world first heard that my husband, Victor Gautier, was found dead in bed, poisoned, the world, as a matter of course, fastened the crime upon poor me, simply because we had a violent quarrel and I threatened to kill him. Consequence: prison for life. Oh, the wretches!

Andre Gautier. All this has happened twelve years ago—all that is past. How came you to be released?

Mrs. Parker. Eugene Gautier, Victor's brother, died a month ago, and made a dying confession. Eugene Gautier—Cain over again, only modern ingenuity and duplicity added to make it more hateful.

Andre Gautier. Afterward?

Mrs. Parker. After? I became married again.

Andre Gautier. To a rich man?

Mrs. Parker. Rich! A perfect Croesus, Andre. Look and behold!

(She walks up and down the room.)

Andre Gautier. Silks, laces and diamonds! Permit me to congratulate you.

Mrs. Parker. During all this time I have not once inquired after Violet, and—and a fortune, both of which I left in your care.

Andre Gautier. The fortune is safe—shall I give her Violet?

No, I hate Violet too much to render her the slightest service. I fear to tell you; I fear to tell you the dreadful truth.

Mrs. Parker. You have squandered the fortune, no doubt.

André Gautier. Alas yes. Speculation did it.

Mrs. Parker. Money is of no object. Give me my heart's love, and I shall feel satisfied. (*André lifts his hand, pointing heavenward.*) André! André! where is Violet? Why do you not take me to her?

André Gautier (*pointing upwards*). Violet is an angel; heaven claimed her at an early age.

Mrs. Parker. Dead, André, dead?

André Gautier. My sister Violet was too pure—too good; they were burdens sufficient in themselves to worry the best of us. People shunned her. It's puzzling, mother, for I always think that in Violet's case, good became evil.

Mrs. Parker. In heaven! The greatest happiness of my life has become more bitter than all else! Oh, André!

(*She falls senseless on a sofa.*)

André Gautier. I hope she is dead. I hope this feeling of woe will madden or kill her.

(*Enter Violet.*)

Violet. How strange! Who is this woman, André?

André Gautier. What brought you here? Leave the room at once, Violet!

Violet. Oh, do not send me away, brother dear. I can not bear to look at her! Is she dead, André?

André Gautier. No, not dead; but leave the room!

Violet. How sweet she looks! André, I feel something tell me that I could love her like a mother. Let me say it once, André, because she seems so helpless. Mother! mother!

André Gautier. Well, well! I don't wonder that people shun and avoid you. This woman lying here is stone—the hardest kind of stone to be found. Mother is without a meaning to her.

Violet. You are so hard and cruel!

André Gautier. And you—you are like a wounded bird, fluttering in the air, wasting its strength in useless evolutions.

Violet. Don't sneer, André! You scorn me because I am weak—does that show your strength? All men are cowards and you I hate and despise.

André Gautier. How spiteful! For true love, commend me to

your sweet, clinging women. Eve partook of the largest share of the apple, doubtless, for it is showing wonderfully well in the sex. She is about to revive—leave the room, Violet.

Violet. I shall take a rose—a rose is a short memory, though. (*She takes a rose.*) I feel that we shall meet again. (*Exit.*)

André Gautier. Are you better, mother? I did almost everything in order to revive you, and in sheer despair was about to send for a doctor. I trembled for your safety.

Mrs. Parker. Dead, André, dead! Take me away! I must have time to think. (*Exit.*)

(Enter servant. He lights the gas in both rooms. Exit. Enter Rose in the "pink room.")

Rose. False! false! (*She paces the room up and down hurriedly.*) Yet it is but just. I left a true and honorable man to weep—to die for me. Oh, God, how guilty I am! I suffer—I suffer! And Alice—she is fast taking André from me. If I could only die! (*She looks at the portrait of Alice.*) How sweet, how pure her portrait looks—no evil passion or guilty look to betray the deep cunning that lurks therein, unseen. If it were herself, now——(*She starts back and looks about her in a startled way.*) Oh, father, father, look down from heaven and pity your erring child! (*She throws herself upon a lounge weeping in angry passion and sudden remorse.*)

(Enter in "blue room" Alice Lee.)

Alice. I feel so unhappy! Rose seems to hate me, and André follows me about like a shadow. There is a change about to happen and I almost feel that I am the cause of it. I ought to go away—to leave this house at once. Yet I must stay until John Raynor pays his promised visit. Oh, to be advised by that kind heart!

(Enter in "blue room" André Gautier.)

André Gautier. Where is Rose?

(Rose starts up with wild eyes and disheveled hair.)

Alice. Rose is with Violet, I believe.

André Gautier. Hush! Don't speak so loud. Violet is hidden away.

Alice. Hidden away!

André Gautier. Yes—no, no! (*Aside.*) What a dolt I am getting to be! (*To Alice.*) I was thinking of something else—Violet has gone for a walk.

Alice. Oh, is that all?

(Rose goes to the door, and, screening herself behind the curtains, looks into the "blue room." Alice's face is turned from her.)

André Gautier. There is something else—Alice, I love you!

Alice (looking at him in horror). You—love—me!

André Gautier. Yes, and I ardently long to make you my wife.

Alice. To—make—me—your—wife!

(Alice swoons in his arms.)

André Gautier. Well, I might as well reward myself, so here goes.

(He kisses Alice passionately. Rose sweeps into the "blue room," swaying from side to side, as if about to fall; then she falls upon her knees, covering her head with the draperies, which she still clutches in her hand.)

André Gautier. Confound it! Why are you forever spying upon my actions? No answer? Well, I am not surprised to see you hide your guilt beneath those draperies; but, believe me, Rose, it is a useless endeavor. Yet, I admire the womanly instinct which prompts you to commit such a fatal blunder; the fatal instinct, that, in my eyes, seems bare cowardice added to unbearable shame.

(Lays Alice down.)

Rose. Did I not submit to your pleading? I trusted you!

André Gautier. Bah!—and showed your trust by marrying John Raynor.

Rose. I felt forsaken, and married John Raynor to please my invalid father. I loved you! The thought of being separated from you became a distraction—to become yours, a strange rapture. And you promised so much!

André Gautier. Did not I lift you from a life of poverty into one of constant pleasure?

Rose. Since then life has become unbearable. To think that I love this man still! I must be mad, otherwise I would hate and despise him. André, why not listen? Do you not see that I am speaking to you in a sort of dream? Keep your promise, André, for when I awake from it, I feel that I shall hate you!

André Gautier. How wearisome! Always in tears, sighs and moans! Oh, you sicken me! Alice is so different!

Rose. Alice! You love Alice?

André Gautier. Yes; a moment ago I asked Alice to be my wife, and she gladly consented.

Rose. My sister is false!

(Rose throws off the draperies and falls crouching upon the floor.)

André Gautier (aside). Sublime! Poor, wretched soul! When

once the tortured heart hunts it out, only to kill it ! The soul is merely a safeguard for driveling fools ! As if anything so ennobling could exist in minds so base ! Bah ! how I envy the clever fellow who can preach such stuff, and render men blind to their better reasoning. (*To Rose.*) Well, Rose, I deeply regret this—I deeply regret that you should have loved me at all. You may confide in me—may tell me your intentions.

Rose. I must leave this house, and take Alice with me.

Andre Gautier. Your intention is——

Rose. To save Alice from a life of remorse; to save her from a fate like mine—from the world—from this shall———a fault committed, if not in your eyes, then in the sight of God !

Andre Gautier. That would be useless, once a woman leaves this house.

Rose. This house !

(Raises to her feet.)

Andre Gautier. Yes, this house.

Rose. Another trick ! Another act of devilry ! I shall save her yet !

Andre Gautier. How ?

Rose. This way !

(*Rose takes a dagger, and plunges it into the heart of Alice, who is still unconscious. Alice moves convulsively and dies.*)

Andre Gautier. Murdered, even in her sleep ! Fool, dolt, to stand by and see it done !

Rose. What have I done ?

Andre Gautier. You have murdered your innocent sister in a fit of mad jealousy.

Rose. Alas, my poor sister ! Better death, sweet Alice, than to live my life over again.

Andre Gautier. You cannot deceive me. Jealousy prompted you to commit this awful crime.

Rose. Don't, don't ! You only harden me. Even were it so, she loved you ! No, no, anything but that !

Andre Gautier. There is no atonement, woman ! Alice hated me; ay, feared and despised me !

Rose. But—but you confessed a moment ago that she loved you; nay, that she consented to marry you.

Andre Gautier. My God, no ! When I confessed my love, her very eyes dilated in horror ! When I asked her to be my wife, she fell pale and rigid, like one dead in my arms.

Rose. No more!—no more! Poor Alice! Wretch, you alone are the murderer!—No, I alone am guilty! Poor Alice!

Andre Gautier (aside). She is surely mad.

Rose. Poor Alice!

(She lifts the dagger about to stab herself. Gautier snatches it from her.)

Andre Gautier. What! kill yourself and allow the crime to be fastened upon me! Live and suffer! Live, to be dragged to prison, to lie there and rot; live to be scorned and mocked, ere you become engulfed in the mad whirlpool of your final destiny!

Rose. Andre! Give me the dagger, Andre!

Andre Gautier. Live! In a moment the dogs of the law will enter here, to drag you through the streets like a beast, to be shunned, perhaps stoned——

Rose. Andre! No, no! Let me die—let me die!

Andre Gautier. Pity cannot reach you; or even I might aid you.

Rose. Let me die—let me die!

(She falls beside Alice.)

Andre Gautier (aside). It is better that she should die, if I could only find a witness. How fortunate!—here comes my mother. She is the best person in the world to suit my purpose.

(He lays the dagger upon the table. Exit.)

(In blue room. Enter Mrs. Claude Parker, who is sleep-walking. She stands perfectly motionless in the doorway, looking straight before her.)

(In the pink room. Enter John Raynor and servant.)

Raynor. Is Miss Lee at home? I am an old friend, and desire to see her at once.

Servant. I don't know, sir. Shall see. Be seated, sir. (*Exit.*)

(In blue room. Mrs. Parker moves slowly to the table; then stares blankly before her. Then she moves her hands about the table and picks up the knife. She looks blankly before her again. Then she moves slowly across the room; her feet come in contact with Rose. Rose starts up, looks into Mrs. Parker's face, then screams aloud, and rushes to the end of the room. Mrs. Parker awakes and shakes convulsively from head to foot.)

(In pink room. Raynor starts up when he hears the scream and rings a bell.)

Raynor. Such a piercing scream! It sounded like Rose's voice. Why don't that dolt of a servant return?

(In the blue room. Mrs. Parker moans faintly, then looks at the bloody dagger in her hands.)

Mrs. Parker. It is stained with blood! I have been walking in my sleep again! Heavens! a blood-stained dagger! What awful deed have I committed in my sleep?

(She looks at the dagger, then at Alice. She stoops over Alice.)

Her dress is stained with blood—there is fresh blood upon this dagger! Heaven pity me! I have killed an innocent young girl in my sleep! Help! help!

(Enter in blue room, John Raynor and Gautier.)

Raynor. What does this mean? Just heaven! Murdered! Alice is dead!

Mrs. Parker (holding up the dagger). Murdered by me! (*She rushes from the room.*)

Raynor. Follow her, quick! She may kill some one else! (*Exit Gautier.*)

Rose. John! John!

Raynor. Unhappy woman! Your sweet, sweet sister is dead—murdered!

Rose. Strike me to your feet, John! I killed her.

Rose falls at his feet. Raynor turns from her, and with bowed head and drooping figure, covers his face with his hands.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I. A refreshment room. The grand ball-room. Enter Violet, with a spoon and bottle in her hand. She is dressed to represent an Italian peasant girl.

Violet. Such confusion—such frolic and fun! I could sing with joy! My poor head! It is turning and turning—and this bottle—the doctor said that I must take this medicine every half hour. And Rose said that I must retain my mask, and under no circumstances to remove it. What shall I do? I'll take it off. (*She takes off the mask.*) Rose can't tell.

(She pours out some medicine, and holds up the spoon with a wry face.)

I hate to take it! (*A pause.*) I won't take it.

(She throws it away.)

Oh, oh, some one is coming! (*Puts up mask and holds it.*)

(Enter Milton Vincent, dressed to represent an American midshipman.)

Vincent. Yonder sweet form belongs to Violet, I'll swear. (*Aside.*)

Violet. It's Milton! (*Aside.*)

Vincent. Violet—sweet Violet!

Violet (aside). I can't fix this ridiculous old mask. Why, the string is broken!

(The mask falls. Vincent goes up to her and tries to see her face. At every attempt she turns her face from him.)

Vincent. Don't attempt to evade me, Violet.

Violet. I'm not Violet. I'm some one else.

Vincent (laughing). Not Violet! Who are you then?

Violet (facing him). What a dear goose you are! I'm an Italian peasant girl.

Vincent. And how lovely! Give me a kiss—you promised me one, you know.

Violet (holding up the bottle). I'll give you a spoonful of this, instead.

Vincent. A patent medicine, as I live. Do you wish to poison me?

Violet. Take the kiss, then.

(Turning from him she fills the spoon with medicine. Vincent leans over her shoulder to kiss her. She gives him the medicine. He splutters and spits it out.)

Violet. You—don't—seem—to—to—like—kissing.

Vincent. N—no; not with a spoon. You promised me one, and —(*kisses her*)—that's much better.

Violet. What did you do that for?

Vincent. To return your medicine.

Violet. How sweet it tasted! And I threw a spoonful away! But some one is coming. Pick up my mask!

(*Enter John Raynor, as a shepherd.*)

Raynor. Is this the refreshment room? Where's the waiter?

Violet (to Vincent, and dropping mask). You may go, Milton. I'll play waiter to amuse this delightful shepherd. (*Exit Vincent.*) I'm the waiter girl, sir. What will you have?

Raynor. A glass of iced wine. A servant with such a sweet face! How sweet and pure she is! (*Aside.*)

Violet. Here's the wine, sir. (*Aside.*) What a charming, charming shepherd!

Raynor. Thank you! (*He takes paper and drops white powder into it.*)

Violet (alarmed). What did you poison it?

Raynor (aside). Did she perceive me? No, no; a trick, merely, to add zest to the wine's flavor.

Violet (taking some medicine). How sweet it tasted, and how delightfully reminiscent of Milton's sweeter kiss.

Raynor. What did you speak?

Violet. I was merely addressing this bottle, sir. Milton said that it is only patent medicine, but it seems like a love potion since he tasted it.

Raynor. Milton! What of him?

Violet. He loves me.

Raynor. So young, yet doomed so soon! Keep away from it child. Love is poison—scorching, withering, blighting. Its victim breathes diviner air only to die. Where is our host?

Violet. You mean my brother?

Raynor. Your brother! Then you are not a servant! Who are you? Heaven! you are Andre Gautier's sister. (*His head drops upon the table.*)

Violet. Something is wrong! I saw him put something in the wine. It may be poison. I'll change the glasses. (*Aside.*)

(*She takes the wine, and places a glass of milk in its place.*)

Raynor (aside). Can I kill the brother of this sweet girl? How

crush innocence with guilt? Poor, frail heart, how you fail me in this hour of need! Why am I not stone, that the resolve, the hate within me might consume the world, if desire could go so far! But this sweet girl! Why did she cross my path?—only to show what a feeble, useless wretch I am? I could crush a handful of thorns to save a suffering creature from a moment's pain, while my poor heart would be ready to cry out that I only held a rose; yet, I came here to-night to kill André Gautier! Fool! fool! to let a sweet child-face come between you and vengeance! That idle dream gone, there is nothing left but death! To die—die! and Rose so near! (*He drinks milk, and lays his head upon the table.*)

Violet. How strange he acts! I must tell André. (*Takes medicine.*) Sweeter than ever! It tastes just like Milton! (*Exit.*)

(Enter Rose and André Gautier. Rose dressed in the garments of a Greek boy; Gautier dressed to represent a Greek corsair.)

Rose. You are right, André, as you always are. Since I have outlived the past, the present seems so sweet. (*Here she staggers, and presses her hand upon her heart.*) (*Aside.*) Courage! the end is near! (*To Gautier.*) I live your life, André, and incredulous as it may seem, there are people in this world who are the dull prose of life, the very dregs of stupor, who designate our blissful existence as sinful! Sin!—as though it were sinful to be merry and gay! Come, André, let us drink!

André Gautier. Sin! death's curse to it! Yes, let us drink! Here's to the devil—women, music and wine.

(Raynor starts up from the chair and looks at them.)

Raynor (aside). Heaven! it is Rose—Rose in the garb of a Greek boy! Oh, sweet heaven, plunge me into eternal chaos, ruin, death! Oh, to be stricken blind—to feel the fire of lightning tingling through my veins—anything except this terrible picture, this too vivid exposure of a lost soul!

(He looks at the glass in Rose's hand, then at the glass upon the table.)

This glass—it is milk, and I ordered iced wine. The girl must have changed the glasses, for Rose is lifting the iced wine to her lips. It is poisoned! Let her drink! let her die!

Violet (within). André, André!

Rose. Your sister calls; go to her at once.

André Gautier. I'll kill her yet. (*Exit.*)

Rose. I wonder if that man is ever troubled with bad dreams; but no matter. I'll drink, drink, drink!

(Here she sings the drinking song from "Girofle Girofla." When finished she raises the glass slowly to her lips.)

Raynor (aside). She is about to drink ! She will die convulsed with agony before my very eyes ! No, no ! (*To Rose.*) Stay ! do not drink !

Rose. A voice—who speaks ?

Raynor (unmasking). The sole person in this world who has a right to command you—your husband !

Rose. You here ! but no matter—I'll drink, drink ! (*Singing.*)

"Then let us drink, let us drink, ah, let us drink !"

You see, John, I am in too good spirits to have them dampened by a dull fellow like you.

Raynor. I am going mad !

Rose (mockingly). Then let us drink ! (*Laughingly.*) Let us drink ! (*In tears.*) Ah, let us drink ! Oh, my God ! (*Aside. She lifts the glass.*)

Raynor. Don't drink, the wine is poisoned !

(The glass falls.)

Rose. Poisoned !—and you would spare me—me !

Raynor. Alas, yes; even were my life to pay the forfeit of your own.

Rose (throwing herself at his feet). Forgive me, John !

Raynor. This is not real; you merely simulate emotions that you do not feel.

Rose. I am kneeling to you, John ! With tears, with prayers, I curse and regret the day I deserted you !

Raynor. I cannot believe you !

Rose. Prove it, John, for in this moment I am willing to combat friend and foe for your sake.

Raynor. Then heaven be your judge !

Rose. You mean——

Raynor. I mean to leave this house !

Rose. And then——

Raynor. To take you with me !

Rose. My God ! you ask too much !

Raynor. I ask but to save you ! Come !

Rose. Impossible ! I cannot !

Raynor. You are forever lost ! No power on earth can save you now ! You are the incarnation of wickedness in the disguise of an angel, and I——

Rose. No, no, do not curse me, John ! I refuse to go with you, but the refusal will kill me.

Raynor. You refuse because you still love André Gautier ?

Rose. No, John, no ! I refuse because I have sworn to kill him !

Raynor (half lifting her up). You speak the truth ; oh, yes, I feel it now ! *(He embraces her wildly.)* I press you to my heart for the last time ! In the desolate years to come the memory of it will cheer and console me.

Rose. Then you will aid me !

Raynor. No ; the life of André Gautier belongs to God. In the hour of its demand he cannot refuse to give it up—until then he is free to live. You must not stain your hands with blood so vile, but, instead, make a vow to consecrate your life to God, as an expiation of your sin. Give him your life for the one you have taken.

Rose. Kill me, but do not ask me to forswear my vengeance.

Raynor. What ! pile guilt upon guilt, and consume your poor life in shame and infamy ? I speak in the name of Tom Lee, your father.

Rose. My father ! He is in heaven.

Raynor. In heaven ! Then it is he, not I, who implores you, who stretches out an arm to save you.

Rose. Pity me—pity me ! The world is gone from me, the loved ones are forever lost, and now you ask me to say an eternal farewell forever.

Raynor. You promise ?

Rose. For your sake, I promise.

Raynor. You swear it ?

Rose. And André Gautier ! Oh, God, my heart is broken !

Raynor. Remember your father !

Rose. John ! *(She clings to him.)*

Raynor. Be strong ! Your father is watching over you.

Rose. I swear—I—swear—it !

(Music is heard.)

Raynor. Come, let us go. They are about to dance. In the excitement we can both escape together. Your dream of life is over, but heaven is open to you ! *(Exit.)*

SCENE II. The ball room. The scene to be changed like a flash, leaving one spacious and handsome apartment. Guests masked, and in rich costumes, are dancing. Gautier and Violet standing alone.

Andre Gautier. This man you speak about—who can he be?

Violet. I do not know, Andre. He ordered iced wine and dosed it with poison, to flavor it.

Andre Gautier. To flavor it! How can you believe such nonsense, Violet?

Violet. He said so.

Andre Gautier. A flavor, doubtless, to add zest to his hatred! He intends to kill some one.

Violet. Andre, you frighten me! Where is Rose?

Andre Gautier. Never mind Rose. Where is the man?

Violet. In the refreshment room—no, he is there!

(Enter Rose and Raynor. They meet face to face with Gautier.)

Andre Gautier. Where are you going, Rose?

Rose. Does your question necessitate an answer?

Andre Gautier. Most decidedly.

Rose. I intend to leave this room.

Andre Gautier. I refuse to let you go.

Rose. Sir, do you mean to insult me in the presence of your guests and my friends?

Andre Gautier. Enough! enough! Stop! I command every lady and gentleman in the room to unmask!

(As Gautier speaks he fastens his eyes upon Raynor in a diabolical manner. The guests stop dancing and scatter in sudden confusion. They all unmask except Raynor.)

Andre Gautier. And you—have you not heard? I desire that you, too, shall unmask.

Raynor. And I refuse, sir!

Andre Gautier. You refuse? Very well! You came into this house unknown to me, and was about to leave it like a thief.

(He rings bell. Enter servant.)

A detective awaits in the next room—send him here at once.
(*Exit servant.*)

Leave the room, Rose.

Rose. You have no longer a right to command me. My right place is by this man's side.

Andre Gautier. He will no longer hide his face, even if it is as hideous as a death's skull!

(He tears off Raynor's mask.)

You here? You shall pay for this!

(Enter Detective.)

Andre Gautier. Arrest that man!

Detective. Upon what charge, sir?

Andre Gautier. See his palsied limbs and cowed, trembling attitude—does not that tell you? If not, he is a thief.

Rose. It is false, you coward!

Andre Gautier. You turn again to the wretched old man you so lately spurned and scorned! Poor Rose! your mind craves a stimulant, and you seek it in the companionship of a drunkard and a thief!

Rose. I am dying, John, take me away!

Detective. You have heard the charge, sir, and it is my unpleasant duty to place you under arrest.

Rose. They cannot part us, John; I will cling to you still.

Andre Gautier. Think of the consequence, Rose! Think of the shame! Think of our love!

Rose. Your love! Never shall your base lips touch mine again!

Andre Gautier. Bitter—bitter! But why this sudden change?

Rose. Since you have broken your promise I have hated and despised you! Hated you! do you hear? And to-night I intended to kill you were it not for John Raynor, who so nobly came between us! Come, John, let us go.

Detective. What is this man to you, Madame?

Rose. To say the beloved name again! Listen! I am his wife—if the wide world could only hear me!—his wife!—John's wife in spite of all.

(They start to go.)

Andre Gautier. Stay! That woman has a purpose to serve, and in order to carry it out, she plays upon this old man's credulity. Let the man go free and place the woman under arrest.

Detective. Upon what charge, sir?

Andre Gautier. The worst charge of all—murder!

Omnes. Murder!

Andre Gautier. Yes; I accuse Rose Raynor of the murder of her sister, Alice Lee. She skillfully fastened the crime upon my poor mother—

(As he says this, Violet clutches hold of Rose, who supports her.)

who is now in an insane asylum, driven thither by the real murderess. This guilty woman knew of it, but permitted my innocent mother to go mad, to avoid the just punishment of her own terrible crime.

Violet. Rose—Rose! Listen to those sweet words; my mother lives! (*She throws herself at Andre's feet.*) Andre! oh, Andre! where is my mother? You said she was dead!

Andre Gautier. Not dead, girl! Mad, mad, mad!

Rose. See, John! I have given my life to God, but even he turns from me! Oh! may the vile wings of some tempest-tossed devil absorb and destroy me, ere I open these weary eyes upon the light of day again!

(Rose presses her hands across her eyes in sudden, turbulent rage, starting back with a rigid, motionless attitude of despair.)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. An apartment in the Insane Asylum. Enter John Raynor and Milton Vincent.

Raynor. How like a dream ! yet how terrible ! After so many sad events, what happiness to find rest at last—and Rose is saved.

Vincent. It is all very strange. That fellow Gautier is a perfect devil. Do you remember when he accused Rose of—of—well, no matter. The mere idea chills my blood. You saved her then, did you not ?

Raynor. Yes; Gautier made the accusation in a fit of jealous rage. Rose and I went to prison together, but fortunately on the moment of our arrival she fell sick with brain fever. This prevented her from making a full confession, as she urgently wished to do. The case was dismissed without trial. Gautier's mother had already admitted the killing. Gautier himself at the time had sworn that he saw his mother commit the murder. Mrs. Parker was examined by a select committee of physicians, and pronounced perfectly sane. Yet no court of justice could hold her for a deed committed in her sleep. She was liberated, but the idea of the murder so weighed upon her that she soon afterward went mad. Gautier came near being addicted for perjury, but escaped upon the plea of being drunk. But enough of this. Rose is saved !

Vincent. Those gloomy events of which you speak have indeed ended happily. Yet that girl—that unhappy girl !

Raynor. You mean Sally Brown ? Hers is a queer story. Sally compelled a young man to marry her against his will, and he fainted immediately after the ceremony. When he became conscious his mind was gone ! He was sent here, and is fast wasting away. Sally embraced every man she came in contact with, and claimed the unhappy stranger as her husband. That explains Sally's presence here.

(Violet and Willy are heard laughing boisterously within.)

Vincent. Violet ! The sweet girl is here.

Raynor. And Willy—it is past belief. Let us step aside; they are about to enter. (*Exit.*)

(Enter Willy with bouquet, and chased by Violet. He runs rapidly around the room, closely followed by Violet. Ever and anon Willy turns about and hits Violet with a flower. Willy stumbles and falls, and Violet clutches hold of him.)

Violet. You bad boy ! I am, oh, so tired !

Willy. I'm not.

Violet. Mind ! You promised to give me the flowers if I caught you. The flowers are fairly won.

Willy. I stumbled; that's not fair !

Violet. Oh, you tease ! Give me the flowers.

Willy. No; that wouldn't be fair. (*Violet throws herself beside him.*) Look here—if you will kiss me—(*Enter Raynor and Vincent unperceived, who look at them in amusement.*) I will give you the flowers.

Violet. No; sister Rose might see us.

Raynor (aside). Sister Rose ! She is here, then.

Willy. Sister Rose is resting in the room above us. Here ! I'll pretend to let you smell the flowers—then kiss me.

(*Vincent shakes his fist at Willy. They hold the immense bouquet of flowers between them, and at each attempt to kiss each other, they kiss the bouquet instead, and each time Willy bites off a flower savagely, and looks at Violet from behind the flowers in a reproachful manner. At last Raynor and Vincent become convulsed with laughter, and both Violet and Willy jump up. Willy stands in the doorway with legs spread apart, to prevent Violet from going out. Violet stops, confused by the boyish attitude and mischievous looks.*)

Willy. Toll paid here !

(*Violet, to escape, stoops down and kisses him. Her golden hair becomes loose and falls over Willy, hiding his face completely.*)

Vincent. The young rascal ! He is biting a different kind of rose, now. (*Willy shows his face.*) He doesn't look reproachful this time, either.

Willy (gives flowers). Fairly won !

Violet (looking down). Oh, it is Milton ! (*To Willy*) You bad boy, Milton saw you ! (*She throws a kiss to Milton and runs out.*)

Willy. It is John ! dear John !

Raynor. My boy ! the tender memories that cling about your sweet smiling face ! Are you happy ?

Willy. Always, John.

Raynor. Come ; tell me all about yourself.

(*They step aside, Raynor sitting in a large chair. Willy climbs up and sits upon the arm of the chair, with his feet on Raynor's lap, his head resting on his shoulder. They exchange glances as if conversing. Vincent picks up the flowers dropped by Willy, and kisses them tenderly.*)

Vincent (aside). Sweet Violet ! these are the flowers you caressed, these—pshaw ! they are the flowers that that young rascal has been chewing for the last half hour.

(*He throws away the flowers in disgust.*)

(Enter Sally Brown, dressed in a robe of bright green, with an immense yellow sash, and wearing a large yellow bonnet, with flowing green ribbons. Enter Violet, who stands at the door.)

Vincent. Great heaven, what is this!

(Sally rushes to Vincent and embraces him.)

Sally. My darling husband, have I found you at last?

Vincent. The devil! she must surely take me for some one else.
My good woman, calm yourself, I am not your husband.

Sally. Not my husband! Base calunny, baser lie! This is a trick!

Vincent. I assure you my dear——

Violet. He calls this woman "dear."

Sally. He calls me dear? (*She embraces him again.*)

Vincent. I say, this is going too far.

(Willy laughs boisterously, and beckons to Violet. She goes to him.)

Sally. You are mine, mine—we shall never part again!

Vincent. I say, let go, won't you? My collar-bone's busted!

Sally. I don't care a fig for all the collar-bones in creation!
Tell me that you love me.

Vincent. I'm blowed if I do! I say—let go—oh, oh!

(Enter Perry Winkle, very pale, and dressed in mourning.)

Winkle. We meet again; once more I behold the ancient dame with the sun-kissed locks.

(Sally permits Vincent to go, then turns to Winkle. Both peer into each other's face until they meet, then both shrink back.)

Sally. Perry Winkle!

Winkle. Sally Brown!

(Each assumes an erect position and walks out in opposite directions with a tragic attitude.)

Vincent. Let me get away from here. Come, Violet!

Violet. After what has just happened? Never, sir! I despise married men. Come, Willy, let us go to Sister Rose.

(Willy jumps down and starts upon a run, with Violet running after. Exit.)

Vincent. Confound the boy! She follows him about like a shadow.

Raynor. What! jealous of the boy?

Vincent. I can't help it; she is so fond of him.

Raynor. Come, what nonsense! Follow me and I will explain everything to Violet.

Vincent. Yes, if you ask Willy's permission to do so. (*Aside.*)

I'll bet a fortune that that young rascal is chewing roses again !
(*Exit.*)

(Enter Mrs. Claud Parker. She sits down, and seems lost in thought. Enter Rose, in the white robe of the Dominican Order of Nuns. She stands in the doorway with bowed head, then advances to the side of Mrs. Parker.)

Mrs. Parker. I am worn out with longing. If Sister Rose would only come.

Rose. Sister Rose is here.

Mrs. Parker. Welcome, dear sister, you are like a breath from heaven.

Rose. Let me hear you speak again. Your voice has a welcome sound; there is a depth of feeling in it, as if you could love and forgive those who had wronged you.

Mrs. Parker. It is your kindness, your enduring friendship that has melted the hard feeling in me. I am no longer mad, yet the fear, the dread of seeing that tender, beseeching face !

Rose. That face—*her* face ?

Mrs. Parker. Pity me, pity me, good sister. I was mad, ill, dying, and you nursed me back to health and strength. You are a saint ! But when I confess my sin, and tell you that I am a murderess, you will fly from me !

(Rose starts back and raises her eyes to heaven, with uplifted hands.)

You shrink from me, sister, yet believe me, I am innocent !

Rose. Yes, you are guiltless.

Mrs. Parker. You tell me I am innocent, but, alas ! I cannot believe it.

Rose. The guilt is not yours.

Mrs. Parker. But the suffering is ! You say I am innocent ! If so, why this torment, this ceaseless unrest ?

Rose. Be calm ; I will tell you ! (*Aside.*) My duty is clear. I have recovered her mind, now let me find the means to keep it so. (*To Mrs. Parker.*) The suffering is yours, but the guilt—(*She staggers as if about to fall. Mrs. Parker supports her.*) I cannot tell you ! This is the punishment ; this the tribunal of a just God !

(Rose stands motionless with bowed head)

Mrs. Parker. Then I am guilty, sister ?

Rose. No, no ! the reflection of that dark crime has swept away the atonement I have always longed to render you. That feeling robbed me of an eternity of pain for a moment, for in that moment I had ceased to suffer ! I feel again !

(She takes the cross, fervently kisses it, then looks heavenward)

My God, I thank thee !

Mrs. Parker. Oh, if I could only forget ! That poor, young girl !

Rose. She was my sister.

Mrs. Parker. Alas ! then my guilt is trebled.

Rose. Alice, Alice, sweet sister, forgive and forget ! I did not mean to kill you. I am the guilty wretch, the miserable woman who killed Alice Lee !

Mrs. Parker. You ! not you ! Sister, I am going mad again !

Rose. Forgive me, forgive me !

Mrs. Parker. You are in tears—your form is convulsed—your voice is changed ! Yet—yet—I cannot believe you !

Rose. I swear it ! It is your turn to pity me !

Mrs. Parker. Alas ! why did I speak ! My suffering was nothing to what I now endure !

Rose. God will reward you. Peace and happiness are near at hand.

Mrs. Parker. And you, good sister ?

Rose. Heaven is merciful. I am consumed with grief and pain. Death will soon end all.

(*Rose takes from the folds of her dress a blood-stained dagger, and lifts it tenderly to her lips.*)

How cruel ! This is the only memento left of my beloved sister. See ! there is blood upon it ! This dagger killed her—the fatal thrust that ended her pure, young life ! I see, I feel it all again ; yet she is not here ! I am lost ! The dagger damns me ! The blood upon it is wet—dripping, and clings about me once more ! (*She screams out.*) Take it away—take it away ! (*She falls.*)

(*Enter Andre Gautier, drunk.*)

Andre Gautier. Mother ! I have found you at last.

Mrs. Parker. Andre Gautier ! Can it be possible ? Leave this room, sir !

Andre Gautier. Be calm, mother, I am come to help you.

Mrs. Parker. Heavens ! You are drunk ! You can scarcely walk ! Andre, I implore of you to leave the room. Go, Andre, for some one is coming.

(*Enter Violet and Willy. Violet runs and throws her arms about Mrs Parker.*)

Violet. Sister Rose told me to enter here at three o'clock to find my mother.

Andre Gautier. Rose—did you say Rose ?

Mrs. Parker. My child ! Violet ! Andre, is this true ?

Andre Gautier. Yes, curse her !

Mrs. Parker. Heaven has indeed sent me peace and happiness. Let me throw myself at the feet of Sister Rose.

Andre Gautier. Rose—did you say Rose? Where is Rose?

(He staggers back and comes in contact with Rose.)

What a pretty women! and dressed in white from head to foot! How strange! I must lift her up!

Mrs. Parker. Wretch! don't touch her!

Andre Gautier. Be calm, mother. What is the use of letting a pretty woman lie on the floor when there is a handsome fellow like me to lift her up?

(He lifts Rose up. She starts and awakes, then looks up and beholds the face of Gautier peering down upon her. She starts to her feet with a gasping cry, and struggles to the side of Mrs. Parker. Andre follows her and takes her hands.)

Andre Gautier. It is Rose! I have found Rose at last!

Willy. Sister Rose! Sister Rose!

Andre Gautier. Sister Rose! Ah, those white garments! Rose is a nun. Curse the religious hypocrites! They have taken from me the woman I love. You belong to me, Rose, in spite of all!

Rose. I belong to God. The soul of Rose has come between us!

(She falls at his feet. Gautier looks down upon her in despair, hatred and disappointment. Mrs. Parker stands apart, with Violet clinging to her in fear, while Willy throws himself by the side of Rose.)

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

SCENE. A planing mill. This scene to be effective must be *real*. Machinery, logs, newly planed boards, sawdust scattered plentifully about, and all necessary accompaniments. In the centre, large revolving saw, with proper belting, used to cut up logs. As the curtain goes up the wheel is revolving and cutting through a log. Through the back entrance is seen towering peaks, and wild, mountainous scenery. Before the rising of the curtain the noise of the saw should be sufficiently loud to penetrate without, so as to become plainly audible. Willy and John Raynor sitting alone, close beside each other.

Raynor. It is almost a year since I came here, Willy, and the delightful climate and healthful surroundings have made a new man of me. We both work hard, but feel better for it. And for the first time we are left utterly alone.

Willy. The mill hands are above in the mountains by this time.

Raynor. Persuaded to go there by the sudden news of new-found gold. But no matter. I feel that a false rumor has led them all astray. It is useless to have the machinery going, so I will shut off the steam. (*Exit*.)

(Willy clutches hold of some belting and swings to and fro. A pause, then the machinery stops. Enter Raynor.)

Raynor. Violet has written to inform me that Sister Rose is going east. The stage will pass on the mountain above. Go there, boy, and seek too obtain a glimpse of her—a token, if possible. Run—delay not!

Willy. To see Sister Rose! I shall never arrive quick enough. (*Exit*.)

Raynor. What a noble boy! How dreary, how uneventful my life would be without him. He is sunshine, air, everything to me. God bless him!

(Enter Andre Gautier disguised as a peddler.)

Andre Gautier. Good day, old man. Do you wish anything in my line?

Raynor. Not to-day, some other time.

Andre Gautier. Come! come! You surely need something. I have footed the mountain roads since morning. I am hungry—

Raynor. Hungry? Then take this. You are welcome to my dinner.

Andre Gautier. And you?

Raynor. I am satisfied. An old man like me can exist on a mere trifle.

Andre Gautier. Are you alone, old man?

Raynor. Yes! The men are above in the mountains searching for gold.

Andre Gautier. It is bad to be left alone, old man. Bad—bad! I'll take your dinner.

(He takes the dinner, spreads it out, swallows some, then takes from an inner pocket a long dagger. He leers at Raynor in a diabolical manner, then runs his fingers over it.)

Andre Gautier. A sharp blade, a dangerous blade, old man. A queer blade to come in contact with an enemy's throat, eh, old man?

Raynor. I am weak and nervous. Put that knife away. Here is another.

(Raynor goes to take the dagger, but Gautier points it at him. The former shrinks back.)

Andre Gautier. Death's curse! the dagger is longing to go to you—take it! (*Aside.*) No, no, not yet!

Raynor. That voice! It is ever ringing in my ears! Let me think! My God, you are Andre Gautier!

(Gautier throws off his disguise.)

Andre Gautier. I am come to kill you, Raynor. Where is the boy?

Raynor. Safe, safe, thank heaven!

Andre Gautier. Fear not, I will hunt him down after I have finished you!

Raynor. The boy is an angel. He is innocent of wronging you. Kill me, if you will, but spare the boy!

Andre Gautier. Weak, despicable old man! If your heart beats for the boy, then let your spirit rise to defend him. If he were only here! How I would like to torture him!—to prolong his agony with you standing by to watch his grief-stricken face! Raynor, I feel like a beast! I am thirsting for your blood, and longing to destroy you, and those who love you! Look at me! I am powerful and strong, while you—bah! you are trembling like a leaf. You were always a coward, Raynor.

Raynor. Take back those words!

(Raynor springs upon Gautier and clutches the dagger. In the struggle Gautier falls across the log. Raynor stands above him with uplifted dagger.)

Raynor. You are powerless, Andre Gautier, but I cannot kill you!

Andre Gautier. Fool, strike, and see how a brave man can die!

Raynor. You are the coward. Your craven heart is beating against mine so violently that its throbbing pulse is ready to die, to burst with a tumult of fear, lest I might kill you! Andre Gautier, you are indebted to the woman you so mercilessly wronged—you owe your miserable life to her from this moment. The last words Sister Rose said to me were—listen: “Spare Andre! Do not let any motive or passion permit you to injure him. Henceforth, the prayers of Sister Rose shall echo constantly from a heart that has suffered so much on his account!” Her every wish is a prayer. Take back your dagger!

Andre Gautier. This is worse than death! (*He looks around wildly.*) Death by a dagger thrust is weak, indeed, to satisfy the mad desire—the tortured feeling that yearns to prolong your sufferings! There, there is the instrument to drown this endless hate!

(*He picks up a rope and clutches Raynor by the arm.*)

Raynor. I am powerless in your grasp. I have spared your life, and you are merciless!

Andre Gautier. A terrible death awaits you, Raynor. My mind has at last awakened! The strain that has hitherto clouded it is gone, and now it is free to inflict the vengeance of a demon! Come, it is not so bad, after all! You shall die to the ceaseless strain of music. In the final strain, the last, sweet, lingering strain, think of me; and, if that should fail to comfort you, let the thought console you that Rose shall yet be mine! Rose—even though the darkest cloister on this earth should hide her from my sight!

Raynor. I dread to think of it. Let me go, or I shall forget my promise and kill you.

Andre Gautier. Come, Raynor, and see how bravely you can face death. See yonder log?—you shall die upon it.

Raynor. I do not understand—you still clutch the dagger.

Andre Gautier. This dagger is useless.

(*He throws it down, then drags Raynor to the log.*)

Raynor. At last I understand. The death you have conceived for me is too horrible! I won't submit, even though I am compelled to kill you!

(They struggle violently. Raynor is thrown upon the log and bound securely with some ropes. His head is turned to the wheel, but some distance from it.)

Andre Gautier. The sight of you lying extended upon that log is a sight to thrill and delight me, Raynor. Now to turn on the steam ! (*Going.*)

Raynor. Wretch, what devil prompts you ?

Andre Gautier. No devil—nonsense ! A mood to contrive devilish deeds—a mind to outwit driveling fools like you ! (*Exit.*)

(A pause, then the machinery is started, while the saw quickly revolves, cutting slowly through the log, on, on, and coming nearer to Raynor's head with each flying moment. Enter Gautier.)

Andre Gautier. Music hath charms, Raynor. Let the delicious strain about you turn your mind back to the old dreams. Dreams of love ! bah ! Could even such a death as this atone for such a mockery ? To think that an old man like you could become so pitiful, so weak, and to think that you should seek to measure weapons with me. I despise you, Raynor, for the contemptible wretch you are, and feeling so, leave you to die.

Raynor. Stay ! Be merciful and stab me ! Horrible, horrible ! —to feel death approach by inches, and such a death !

Andre Gautier. Mercy ? Where is your past belief ? Religion seldom seems so crude and useless as when one of its hapless victims is in the throes of death ! Despair points out to the poor wretch the neglect of grander passions—for what ? Weak, vain, soulless hypocrisy, blighted hopes, carrying the hopeless victim back to a disappointed life, leaving no pleasure, only empty, dismal woe !

Raynor. Unhappy man, you most faithfully delineate the end that is sure to be your own. You shall die cursed—you shall die like a beast !

Andre Gautier. Do the prayers of Sister Rose avail you now ? (*The scene grows dark.*) Prayers ! they become taunts, to mock one in his grief in the hour of need. (*The scene grows very dark.*) Enough ! I shall search for the boy and kill him ! Farewell, Raynor, and forever, for we two shall never meet again ! (*Exit.*)

(A pause, then enter Sister Rose, covered with the black cloak used by her order when traveling. She stands in the doorway with bowed head, then advances into the room with slow, weary steps, as if greatly fatigued.)

Rose (aside). I am so wearied ! Such a terrible walk over hill, through thorn and vine, in search of a place to seek shelter. In all my wanderings this is the first habitation I have met with. It is so dark I cannot see ! What strange noise is this ? Alas ! where can

I be ? (*She gropes about in the dark, then falls down against some lumber.*) I am so ill, yet I must not die ! (*She starts up. Raynor moans feebly, and Rose looks about her in terror.*) A strange sound, as if some human creature were in pain. Oh, if the clouds would only disperse, and permit the moon to show itself.

(*As she speaks the distant mountain scene lights up, and the moon is seen to struggle through the darkness. The moonlight falls across John Raynor and the whirling saw, in one bright, narrow belt, Rose standing in the end of it.*)

Raynor. What is this ? Kissed in death by the moon's soft rays ?
Alas, and death so near !

Rose. Strange sight ! My God, it seems like murder !

Raynor (looking around). Sister Rose, I see you again ! But, sister, it is in your power to save me. Quick ! help, help !

Rose. John ! It is John !

Raynor. Help, sister, save me !

Rose. I cannot. Those ropes——

Raynor. A dagger—on—the—floor ! Sister, it will be too late !
The saw is almost touching—Sister !—My God !—Help ! the dagger !——

(*Rose finds the dagger. The black cloak falls off, leaving the white robe exposed. She severs the ropes quickly, and lifts John up. The saw is so near that it clutches his clothes, tearing them away.*)

Raynor. Saved, good sister, saved, and by you !

(*Rose stands motionless, with bowed head.*)

Speak, sister ! You forgive me ? You are happy ?

Rose. I am in peace. God is merciful. And you, John ?

Raynor. Your peace is my happiness. How came you here, sister ?

Rose. The stage I had taken was stopped by robbers, and the passengers were bound hand and foot. I, alone, was permitted to go. By God's will I wandered here !

Raynor. How you must have suffered, good sister !

(*Enter Willy, running. He kneels at the feet of Rose, who stoops down and kisses him.*)

Rose. Why have you hurried ? You are breathless and excited.

Willy. John—Sister ! Such a scene !

Raynor. What ? Speak, boy, speak !

Willy. The errand you sent me on proved fruitless, as the stage coach was attacked by robbers ! Coming back, I met—
Andre Gautier. He caught me in his arms, and was about to

strangle me, when the mill hands, coming here from the mountain above, beheld the ragged stranger. They thought Andre was one of the robbers, and shot him without warning. They are coming here !

Rose. Terrible tale to be told by such innocent lips. Cruel Andre Gautier !

(A commotion outside. Enter Andre Gautier held between two men. He is covered with blood. A white, blood-stained cloth is bound around his head. They are followed by the mill hands. They all carry lanterns. The scene lights up. Gautier staggers apart.)

Andre Gautier. Shot down like a dog ! Shot from behind by a paltry lot of cowards ! If they had to come face to face — (*He glares fiendishly at the mill hands*) the pleasure would be mine, not theirs !

Raynor. Wretch, you deserve a worse fate ! Yet, in spite of all, I pity you ; I forgive you.

Andre Gautier. Who speaks—Raynor ? Death's curse ! Alive ? Alive ? That weak, despicable old man to live, while I must die ? Die ? Who speaks of death ? It is only calumny, the sting of envy ! I shall not die !

(Gautier staggers to the log, and lifts up the ropes.)

Cut with a knife at the moment of final dissolution ! Death's curse ! Who could be so pitiless as to sweep from me such a sweet revenge !

(Gautier staggers forward with the ropes in his hands until he comes to Rose. He gazes upon her in wonder, doubt, ecstasy—everything.)

Andre Gautier. It is Rose ! Rose is come ! Rose is come to love me again ! Rose, Rose, sweet Rose !

(Rose gazes at him in speechless agony ; her mouth moves in an attempt to speak.)

Andre Gautier. Sweet Rose ! Speak, Rose !

Rose. Calm yourself, Andre, for you are dying !

Andre Gautier. Die, and cease to look into your sweet eyes, cease to listen to your tender voice !

Rose. I have taken a vow, Andre, to remain dumb in your presence. I break the vow, Andre, because your future life is in peril. Andre, repent ! Jesus, soften him, and tear from his heart the cruel stains of sin ! Andre ! My God ! Repent, Andre ! Take this cross. Andre, do not die in despair, I implore you !

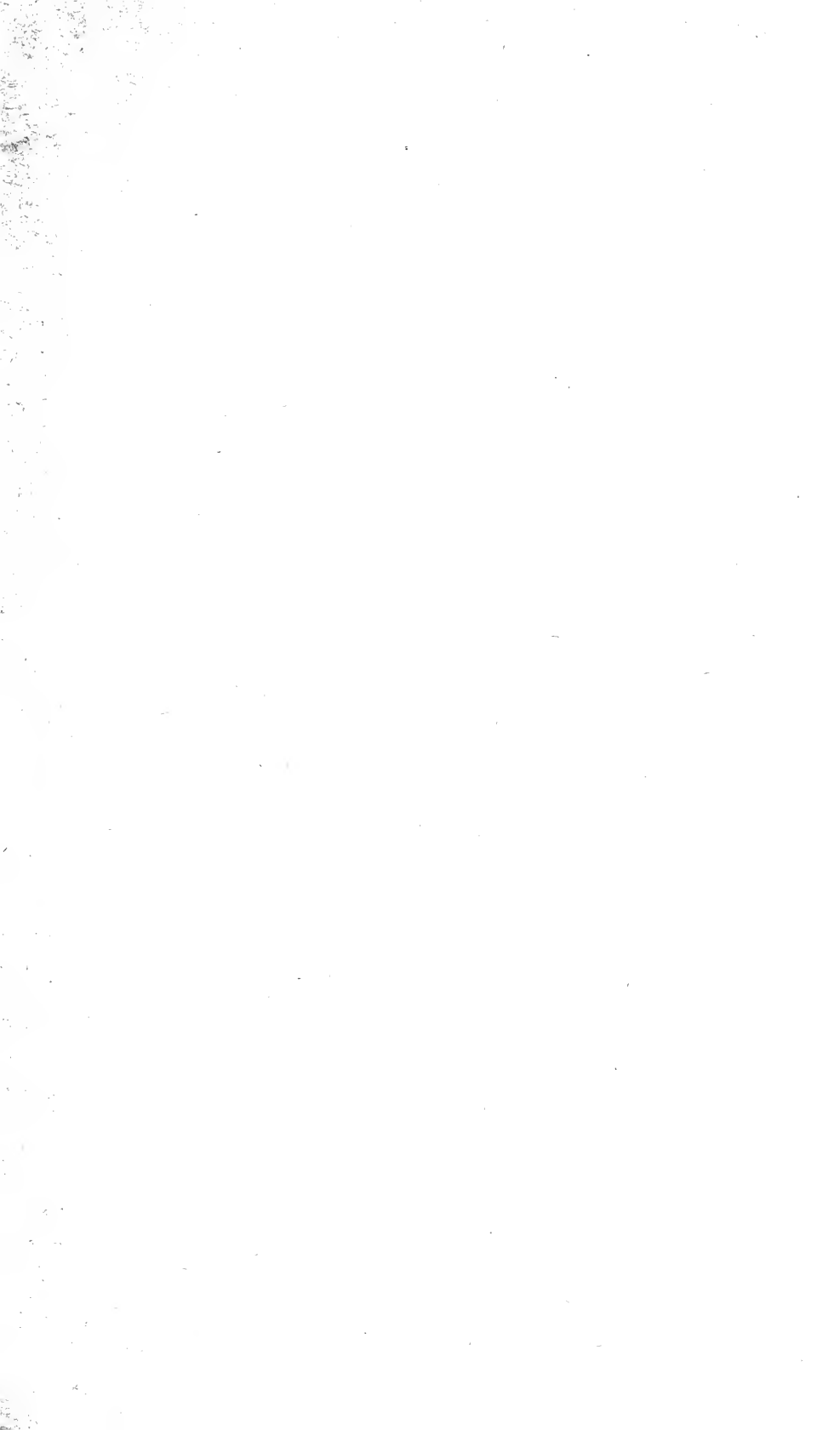
Andre Gautier. Despair ? Yet her voice seems to drown this inner woe !

(He takes the cross and looks at it. The look of tenderness changes to a sight

of hell. He throws the cross from him, and twining the ropes about his arms, he fastens his last look upon Raynor, and dies in agony; yet tossing the ropes to and fro, as if in death he still thought they bound the form of Raynor. When dead, Rose takes her black cloak and throws it over him; then she kneels beside him. Crossing her hands, she lifts her eyes to heaven and her lips move as if in prayer.

CURTAIN.

(THE END.)



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